

For Immediate Release:

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Jesse White Calls for a New Dr. King Statue Along with a More Prominent Location on Capitol Grounds

White will contribute the first \$5,000 to fund establishing a new statue

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White is calling for the creation of a new statue of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and is urging that it be placed in a prominent location on the Capitol grounds in Springfield. White will contribute the first \$5,000 to the fund established for designing and building the new statue of Dr. King.

White noted that now that the Illinois House of Representatives has established the Statue and Monument Review Task Force to review statues and monuments located on the Capitol Complex, the time is right to work in earnest to replace the current statue of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. — located at the corner of Second Street and Capitol Avenue, which is across the street from the State Capitol Building. Many feel, including White, that this statue does not properly reflect Dr. King.

“I stand ready to help in any way that will bring about a new statue of Dr. King that is prominent, dignified and representative not only of the man as I knew him but of the man as he was known to the nation and the world,” said White. “This includes contributing the first \$5,000 to this effort. Dr. King is an icon — a man who stood for equality, who rejected bigotry and segregation, and who did so in a non-violent manner. It is fitting and proper to commission a new statue of Dr. King and to find a more prominent location on the Capitol Complex.”

Dr. King served as one of White’s earliest mentors. White first met Dr. King when White was a student at Alabama State College — now Alabama State University — in Montgomery, Alabama, in the early 1950s. Leaving Chicago for Alabama brought many challenges and frustrations due to segregation.

During White’s time at Alabama State College, he attended church in northern Montgomery where Dr. King served as the pastor. White had the privilege of listening and observing him firsthand. Following the lead of Dr. King, Rosa Parks and other civil rights leaders, White participated in the Montgomery Bus Boycott that ultimately led to the desegregation of the public transit system. White said that this peaceful protest taught him the importance of perseverance and working together toward a common goal.

“To this day, I remain impacted by Dr. King’s teachings,” said White. “His values and dignified behavior continue to inspire and resonate with me. I remember Dr. King attending my college basketball games and staying afterward to offer me words of encouragement and support. He made a difference in my life.”

White said he is pleased that House Deputy Majority Leader Mary Flowers (D-Chicago) is serving as the chairperson of the Illinois House’s Statue and Monument Review Task Force, a bipartisan effort.

“I look forward to working with the task force and helping in any way I can to commission a new statue of Dr. King,” said White.

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